



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – March 22, 2015

Heart to Heart...

I could only hope that all the fathers in this congregation would read this, not because I wrote it, but because of the serious responsibility God has placed upon fathers. In this, I am speaking to the saved, not anyone outside Christ Jesus. Too many fathers are being pulled away from what God calls them in their relationship to the Lord Jesus. Because of their lack of interest in spiritual matters, the family suffers and most aren't even aware. Too many fathers are giving their responsibility to the mother and that too creates problems in the home. It makes the home weak because it goes against what God calls us to as fathers.

God is the one who created and designed the home life. Man is the one who refuses to pay attention and wonder why there are so many rifts between husband/wife and parents/children. Here is God's call to a Christian father: "***Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.***" (Ephesians 6:4) If fathers fail at this, there will be griefs in the family, especially down the road in life.

One of the best examples, though many probably don't know about is Elkanah found in I Samuel 1. We won't deal with every detail but look at a man of God in bringing up his children, his family in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. He was a great example to his family. Elkanah was the father of Samuel. We find this father setting worship as a high priority before his family (I Samuel 1:3). He took his family with him (I Samuel 1:21). It wasn't a broken up family by some going, some staying. Elkanah brought his family up to worship and sacrifice to the Lord in the truth. Fathers should always be instructing/disciplining in the truth!

He trained his family by making sure they were supplied with the necessary needs for worship (I Samuel 1:4). Elkanah made certain his wife and children knew what they were there for. He was leading the home to God! How many husbands/fathers are doing this today? How many are faithfully teaching, training and showing God to his children and wife?

Elkanah loved his wives (yes, at this time it was permitted). He loved them both, especially Hannah (I Samuel 1:5). Just a note husbands: we are called to love our wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). When a husband shows love for their wife, they are teaching their children how to love and treat their wife. This too is bringing up our children "*in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*" Showing your children how to be a godly, loving husband speaks volumes that the husband loves the Lord!

Finally, Elkanah's name means "*God has possessed.*" His name says a lot about who he is and how he lived. He had given his life into the hands of God and was sincere in his faith. The result: a true example of a God-fearing father. Samuel became a godly man because of a godly father and mother!

I know there are many more things that can be learned from these Scriptures but these were some that stood out as I was thinking about the role as a father.

I want to encourage all our fathers, be dedicated to the Lord. It is heart-wrenching to watch families dissolve into little groups among themselves when they should be one in the Lord. It is discouraging when husbands do not take to heart how to treat their wives (and the same with wives) and the children are not instructed at all by these examples. It is sad to listen to children speak about their parents (and yes parents, they do talk whether you like it or not) when they share there is little about God in their home life. Remember, you only have ONE opportunity to get this right in your life and your response is going to affect generations. It's going to affect the strength in the church. Think about it!!!

Brent